

Latest Picture of Governor Davis



Harry L. Davis

FULTON COUNTY TRIBUNE

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Some Aspects of the Farmers' Problems

By BERNARD M. BARUCH

(Reprinted from Atlantic Monthly)

The Department of Agriculture is often spoken of as a special concession to the farmers, but in its commercial results, it is of as much benefit to the buyers and consumers of agricultural products as to the producers, or even more. I do not suppose that anyone opposes the benefits that the farmers derive from the educational and research work of the department, or the help that it gives them in working out improved cultural methods and practices, in developing better yielding varieties through breeding and selection, in introducing new varieties from other parts of the world and adapting them to our climate and economic condition, and in devising practical measures for the elimination or control of dangerous and destructive animal and plant diseases, insect pests, and the like. All these things manifestly tend to stimulate and enlarge production, and their general beneficial effects are obvious.

It is complained that, whereas the law restricts Federal Reserve banks to three months' time for commercial paper, the farmer is allowed six months on his notes. This is not a special privilege, but merely such a recognition of business conditions as to be business with country people. The crop farmer has only one turnover a year, while the merchant and manufacturer have many. Incidentally, I note that the Federal Reserve Board has just authorized the Federal Reserve banks to discount commercial paper for a period of six months, to conform to the nature of the business.

The Farm Loan banks are pointed to as an instance of special government favor for farmers. Are they not rather the outcome of laudable efforts to equalize rural and urban conditions? And, about all the government does to help the farmer is to run a little credit at the start. Eventually the farmers will provide all the capital and carry all the liabilities themselves. It is true that Farm Loan bonds are tax exempt, but that is a privilege of municipal light and traction plants, and new housing is to be exempt from taxation, in New York, for ten years.

On the other hand, the farmer reads of plans for municipal housing projects that run into the billions, of hundreds of millions annually spent on the merchant marine; he reads that the railroads are being favored with increased rates and virtual guarantees of earnings by the government; he reads that the result to him of an increased toll on all that he sells and all that he buys. He hears of many manifestations of governmental concern for particular industries and interests, and he reads that the railroads for insolvency is undoubtedly for the benefit of the country as a whole, but what can be of more general benefit than encouragement of ample production of the principal necessities of life, and the free flow from contented producers to satisfied consumers?

While it may be conceded that special governmental aid may be necessary in the general interest, we must at least be able to distinguish between agriculture and the production and distribution of farm products are not accorded the same opportunities that are provided for other businesses; especially as the enjoyment by the farmer of such opportunities would appear to be even more contributory to the general good than in the case of other industries. The spirit of American democracy is unalterably opposed, alike to enacted special privilege and to the special privilege of unequal opportunity that arises automatically from the failure to correct glaring economic inequalities. It is an essential function of democratic government to equalize opportunity so, whether by the repeal of protective statutes or the enactment of modern ones. If the anti-trust laws keep the farmers from endeavoring scientifically to integrate their industry while other industries find it to meet modern conditions without violating such statutes, then it would seem reasonable to find a way for the farmers to meet them under the same conditions. The law should operate equally in fact. Repealing the economic inequalities of agriculture is no injustice to the other side, which is in good repair.

We have traveled a long way from the old conception of government as merely a defensive and policing agency; and legislative, corrective, or even legislative, which apparently is of a special nature, is often of the most general beneficial consequences. Even the First Congress passed a tariff act that was a reward for the protection of manufacturers; but the protective tariff always has been defended as a means of promoting the general good through a particular approach; and the statute books are filled with acts of benefit of shipping, commerce, and labor.

IV
Now, what is the farmer asking? Without trying to catalogue the remedial measures that have been suggested in his behalf, the principal proposals that bear directly on the improvement of his disintegrating and marketing relations may be summarized as follows:

First: storage warehouses for cotton, wool, and tobacco, and elevators for grain, of sufficient capacity to meet the maximum demand on them at the peak of the marketing period. The farmer thinks that either private capital must furnish these facilities, or the state must erect and own the elevators and warehouses.

Second: weighing and grading of agricultural products, and certification thereof, to be done by impartial and disinterested public inspectors (this is being accomplished to some extent by the federal licensing of weighers and graders), to eliminate underweighing, overcharging, and unfair grading, and to facilitate the utilization of the stored products as the basis of credit.

Third: a certainty of credit sufficient to enable the marketing of products in an orderly manner.

Fourth: the Department of Agriculture should collect, tabulate, summarize, and regularly and frequently publish and distribute to the farmers, full information from all the markets of the world, so that they shall be as well

informed of their selling position as buyers now are of their buying position.

Fifth: freedom to integrate the business of agriculture by means of consolidated selling agencies, co-ordinating and co-operating in such way as to put the farmer on an equal footing with the large buyers of his products, and with commercial relations in other industries.

When a business requires specialized talent, it has to buy it. So will the farmers; and perhaps the best way for them to get it would be to utilize some of the present machinery of the large established agencies dealing in farm products. Of course, if he wishes, the farmer may go further and engage in flour-milling and other manufactures of food products. In my opinion, however, he would be wise to stop short of that. The public interest may be opposed to all great integrations; but, in justice, should they be forbidden to the farmer and permitted to others?

The corporate form of association cannot now be wholly adapted to his objects and conditions. The looser co-operative form seems more generally suitable. Therefore, he wishes to be free, if he finds it desirable and feasible, to resort to co-operation with his fellows and neighbors, without running ahead of the law. To urge that the farmers should have the same liberty to consolidate and co-ordinate their peculiar economic functions, which other industries in their fields enjoy, is not, however, to concede that business integration should be a legislative sanction to exercise monopolistic power. The American people are as firmly opposed to industrial as to political autocracy, whether attempted by rural or by urban industry.

For lack of united effort the farmer as a whole is still marketing their crops by antiquated methods, or by no methods at all, but they are surrounded by a business world that has been modernized by the use of the motor car, the airplane, the radio, and the telephone. The American farmer is a modern of the modern in the use of labor saving machinery, and he has made vast strides in recent years in scientific tillage and efficient farm management, but as a business in contact with other modern methods of agriculture is a "hobby horse" in competition with high power automobiles. The American farmer is the greatest and most intractable of individuals. While industrial production and all phases of the commercial mechanism and its myriad accessories have articulated and co-ordinated themselves all the way from natural raw materials to retail sales, the business of agriculture has gone on in much the one man fashion of the backwoods of the first part of the nineteenth century, when the farmer was a producer of raw materials, and he was not a businessman.

We, as city people, see in high and speculatively manipulated prices, spoilage, waste, scarcity, the results of defective distribution of farm products. Should it not occur to us that we have a common interest with the farmer in his attempts to attain a degree of efficiency in distribution corresponding to his efficiency in production? Do not the recent fluctuations in the May wheat option, apparently unrelated to normal interaction of supply and demand, afford a timely proof of the need of some stabilizing agency as the grain growers have in contemplation?

It is contended that, if their proposed organizations be perfected and operated, the farmers will have in their hands an instrument that will be capable of dangerous abuse. We are told that it will be possible to pervert it to arbitrary and oppressive price-fixing from its legitimate use of ordering and stabilizing the flow of farm products to the market, to the mutual benefit of producer and consumer. I have no apprehensions on this point.

In the first place, a loose organization, such as any union of farmers might be, where the members are not truly and promptly controlled as a group, is a corporation. The one is a loose corporation, the other an agile autocracy. In the second place, all possible power of organization, the farmers cannot succeed to any great extent, or for any considerable length of time, in fixing prices. The great law of supply and demand works in the marketing of the best laid plans that attempt to fix it. In the third place, their power will avail the farmer nothing if it is abused. In our time and country power is of value to its possessor only so long as it is not used to the detriment of the public. It is fair to say that I have seen no signs of responsible quarters of a disposition to dictate prices. There seems, on the contrary, to be a commonly beneficial purpose to realize a stability that will give an orderly flow of farm products to the consumer and ensure reasonable and dependable returns to the producer.

In view of the supreme importance to the national well-being of a prosperous and contented agricultural population, we should be prepared to go a long way in assisting the farmers to get an equitable share of the wealth they produce, through the inauguration of reforms that will procure a continuous and increasing stream of farm products. They are far from getting a fair share now. Considering the capital and the long hours of labor put in by the average farmer and his family, he is remunerated less than any other occupational class, with the possible exception of teachers, and the present general distrust of the farmer is exceptional and is linked with the inevitable economic readjustment following the war. It must be remembered that, although representing one-third of the industrial production and half the total population of the nation, the rural communities ordinarily enjoy but a fifth to a quarter of the national national gain. Notwithstanding the taste of prosperity that the farmers had during the war, they are today a lower standard of living among the cotton farmers of the South than in any other part of the country. In conclusion, it seems to me that the farmers are chiefly striving for a generally beneficial integration of the business, of the same kind and charac-

ter that other business enjoys. If it should be found on examination that the attainment of this end requires methods different from those which other activities have followed, and the purpose should we not sympathetically consider the plea for the right to co-operate, if only from our own enlightened self interest, in obtaining an abundant and steady flow of farm products?

In examining the agricultural situation with a view to its improvement, we shall be most helpful if we maintain a detached and judicial viewpoint, remembering that existing wrongs may be chiefly an accident of unsymmetrical economic growth instead of a creation of malevolent design and conspiracy. We Americans are prone, as Professor David Friday well says in his admirable book, "The Social and Economic History of the United States," to seek a "criminal intent behind every difficult and undesirable economic situation." I can positively assert from my contact with men of large affairs, including bankers, that, as a whole, they are followed by the small as they see them the obligation to go with their power. Preoccupied with the grave problems and heavy tasks of their own immediate affairs, they have not turned their thoughtful personal attention or their constructive abilities to the deficiencies of agricultural business organization. Agriculture, it may be said, suffers from their preoccupation and neglect rather than from any purposeful manipulation by them. They ought now to begin to respond to the farmers' difficulties, which they must realize are their own.

On the other hand, my contacts with the farmers have filled me with respect for them—for their sense, for their patience, for their tolerance. Within the last year, and particularly at a meeting called by the Kansas State Board of Agriculture and at another called by the Committee of Seventeen, I have met many of the men of the new movement, and I testify in all sincerity that they are endeavoring to deal with their problems, not as promoters of a narrow class interest, not as exploiters of the hapless consumer, not as merciless monopolists, but as honest men bent on the improvement of the common weal.

We can and must meet such men and such a cause half way. Their business is our business—the nation's business.

GOITRE REMOVED

DAYTON LADY TELLS HOW

Mrs. Louise Will, 228 Gettysburg Ave., Dayton, O., says she will tell or write how she was relieved of an inward goitre with Sorbol Quadruple, a colorless liniment.

"You can see the treatment and get the name of the doctor who cured me," says Mrs. Will, "and I have been cured of my goitre."

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DELINQUENT TAX CERTIFICATION

The lands, lots and parts of lots returned delinquent by the treasurer of Fulton County, with the taxes and penalties charged thereon agreeable to law, are contained and described in the following list, viz:

Owner	Description	AMBOY TOWNSHIP	Acres	Value	Tax
Herr, Sylvester M.	4-9-18 SE SE	ROYALTON TOWNSHIP	40	\$3810.00	\$109.44
Delaney, Nicholas P.	3-9-25 W½NW NE and N½ NW	PIKE TOWNSHIP	100	5160.00	226.02
Kenlath, Mary T.	7-7-3 E½SE and N 11-16 E½ SE	FULTON TOWNSHIP	135	11060.00	279.15
Galin, Dorothy	4-9-36 E½ SW		40	3880.00	124.54
Klein, Peter and Mary	4-10-3 W½ NE and E½ NW (EX SW 6 A)		154	9170.00	267.81
Craig, James A.	4-10-5 W½ SW		40	4800.00	213.31
Craig, James A.	4-10-6 E½ SE and NW SE		120	7950.00	237.17
Edwards, Chas. and Persea	parts of lot 1 and 2 in A1			880.00	34.52
Reams, Jasper and Nellie	8-7-23 S½ NE (EX E 5A)	SWANCREEK TOWNSHIP	75	4840.00	117.12
Reams, Jasper and Nellie	8-7-23 E½ SW		80	3740.00	96.59
Boro Realty Company	8-7-29 SW pt. SE and SE pt. SW		44.50	2550.00	61.79
Malosh, Isaac	8-7-36 E-2-3 W 3-8 NE		40	1620.00	39.19
Slee, James A.	8-6-7 E½ SW		80	3440.00	142.29
Gibson, W. A. and Elizabeth	8-6-11 E 5-8 SW		100	4000.00	96.79
Shoemaker, Wm. H. and Margaret	8-1-12 SE SW		40	1510.00	70.43
Flogus, Geo. lot No. 14 Bassett's 2nd Addition		SWANTON SCHOOL IN SWAN CREEK TOWNSHIP		70.00	2.73
Kourth, Anna B. lot No. 34 and 35 Bassett's 2nd Addition				100.00	2.04
Hurd, Chas. W. lots 9 and 10 Sargent's Addition		DELTA IN SWAN CREEK TOWNSHIP		200.00	98.92
Weber, Emil W34 of lots 420, 421 and 422 S and B Addition		WAUSEON VILLAGE		2040.00	75.42
Stevenson, Chester C., lot 39, Donnelly's Addition				100.00	3.69
Murdock, David, block 7 lot 1 part Gimber's Addition		FAYETTE VILLAGE		990.00	304.8
Wisner, Peter, block 10, lot 7 part Allen's Division				350.00	10.93
Denton, Walter David 1-9-19 parcels 79 and 82				670.00	20.97
Heminger, Floyd lot 14, Peter Miller's Addition		SWANTON VILLAGE		490.00	16.04
Seely, Edward (Trustee) lot 2 East 22		METAMORA VILLAGE		20.00	12.91

And notice is hereby given that whole of such several tracts, lots or parts of lots, will be certified as delinquent to the Auditor of State by the County Auditor on the second Thursday in February A. D. 1922, unless the taxes, assessments and penalty are paid before that time.

F. E. Perry, Auditor of Fulton County, Ohio.

Wauseon, Ohio, January 31st, 1922.

He was sorry for poor Betsy—or

tried to be—but an exhilarating sense of triumph remained. He had never felt anything like it—nor yet like the joyous sensation her mute confession had brought him.

She was in the tiny porch when he called at evening, a new radiance seemed to shine in her dark eyes.

"Little girl," spoke Barrie gently, "Poor Betsy, I am sorry that I had to bring grief upon you with my song. If I had known that it would cause you unhappiness—"

Betsy laughed, the merry sound shocked him, he turned to stare at her. "It was silly of me," she said, "to be so afraid. But you see, Jack is so very jealous—and some one wrote him about how much you and I have been together. So he wired me to expect him back, and when I looked out of the window and saw him coming up the walk, just as you were trilling out that you 'lo